

San Diego Newsline

Downtown San Diego news — the budget, public safety, business, and the civic life of America's Finest City

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COUNTY

Senior Affordable Housing Breaks Ground in Imperial Beach



Illustration from a photo by Nolan Anders · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

Construction kicked off today on The Haven on Palm, a 50-unit affordable housing community for older adults in Imperial Beach. Half of the homes will be set aside for seniors exiting homelessness.

The three-story, \$48 million building is being built on the former site of the Imperial Beach United Methodist Church. The homes will be located next to the new Imperial Beach Neighborhood Center, which provides food assistance and other support services to the community.

Wakeland Housing and Development is leading the project and will lease the units. Funding comes from public, private and community partners. The County contributed \$6 million and 25 housing vouchers.

The Haven on Palm is expected to be completed by early 2028.

Since 2017, the County has invested more than \$330 million in affordable housing including loans through the Innovative Housing Trust Fund. These investments have created over 3,900 new homes, with another nearly 2,200 additional homes in development.

Explore the County's interactive dashboard for details on the County's affordable housing inventory and visit the Housing for All Hub for services, resources, and property information through its Affordable Housing Map.

County of San Diego news release · Sep 3, 2026



Illustration from a photo by Edward O'Connor (hober) · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

COUNTY

County Launches Online System for Property Assessment Appeals

The County has launched a new online system that lets property owners file property tax assessment appeals quickly and securely. Residents can now submit, review and track their appeals online, anytime, from any device.

An assessment appeal allows property owners to request a review of the taxable value assigned to their property by the County Assessor.

The regular filing season is from July 2 through Nov. 30. During that period, the Office of the Clerk of the Board accepts Assessment Appeals Applications from property owners.

Their opinion of the property's market value

The new system streamlines the appeals process, reduces delays and offers more convenience than traditional paper applications.

With the new system, property owners can:

Submit an appeal form any device, including smartphones and tablets.

Keep their information secure through the online portal.

This upgrade supports the County's ongoing effort to modernize public services and make them easier, faster and more accessible for all.

A redesigned Assessment Appeals website has launched alongside the

new system. It features:

Step-by-step instructions to reduce filing errors

Tutorial videos and helpful resources for first-time filers

A more streamlined filing experience through the new portal

The Clerk of the Board reviews the application and contacts the property owner if anything is missing.

When the application is complete, it is sent to the Assessor's Office. An appraiser reviews the case and may request additional information.

An independent appeals board hears and decides the case. By law, the board has up to two years from your filing date to issue a decision.

Have questions? Contact the Clerk of Board of Supervisors' office at AssessmentAppeals@sdcounty.ca.gov.

County of San Diego news release · Sep 3, 2026

COUNTY

County, CDC Launch Follow Up CASPER Survey on Tijuana River Valley Health Impacts

The County and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will launch a second Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) to evaluate community health impacts related to the ongoing Tijuana River sewage and pollution crisis.

The new survey, Sept. 17 through Sept. 19, will revisit conditions first documented in 2024 and gather updated information from a new sample of representative households.

Although long-term solutions to the pollution crisis are underway, County and CDC teams will again walk neighborhoods in the Tijuana River Valley to hear directly from residents. The follow-up assessment will help identify continued health concerns, changes since 2024, and additional support

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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County, CDC Launch Follow Up CASPER Survey on Tijuana River Valley Health Impacts

needed for families living with the impacts of sewage contamination.

The teams will visit randomly selected households Thursday, Sept 17 and Friday, Sept. 18 between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Survey interviews take about 20 minutes, participation is voluntary and anonymous, and interviewers are

clearly identified with badges, reflective vest and include bilingual English-Spanish staff.

“We can’t fully understand or solve the Tijuana River pollution crisis without hearing directly from our South Bay residents living with its impacts every single day,” said Chair Pro Tempore Paloma Aguirre. “Our neighbors’ experiences and stories provide critical insight and information that will help guide the County of San Diego and our federal partners in tackling the sewage pollution. South San Diego’s health and experiences matter, and I encourage

every neighbor to make their voice heard by participating in the CASPER survey.”

County Public Health Officer Sayone Thihalolipavan, MD, MPH said the follow-up assessment is an important step in tracking progress.

“Hearing from a new sample of representative families will help us continue to validate and respond to the community’s experiences” Dr. Thihalolipavan said. “By comparing this assessment to the one from 2024, we can better identify what is working and what more needs to

be done to support our South Bay neighbors,”

The first CASPER, conducted in October 2024, found widespread health concerns they believed were linked to sewage contamination, including headaches, nausea, cough and throat irritation. Many households also reported declining quality of life and described steps they were taking to avoid contaminated areas. Those findings helped elevate regional awareness and supported the County’s advocacy for increased state and federal funding.

Courts · Transit · Public safety

The new survey will build on those findings and help determine whether health impacts have changed or intensified.

This CASPER is separate from the Assessment of Chemical Exposures, a non-randomized online health survey conducted with federal partners with in 2024.

Residents can learn more or contact staff by visiting sandiegocounty.gov/southregionhealth or emailing phs.southregionhealth.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov

County of San Diego news release · Sep 9, 2026

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy



BUSINESS Member Spotlight: Autism Society San Diego

For 60 years, Autism Society San Diego has been a trusted source of connection, support, and community for autistic individuals and their families across the region. What began in 1966 as a small, determined group of parents has grown into one of San Diego’s most active and impactful autism-serving organizations — offering year-round programs, monthly services, and a welcoming community built on inclusion, dignity, and belonging.

This summer, Autism Society San Diego proudly celebrated the 25th anniversary of their Surf Camp program, a beloved San Diego

tradition that has introduced thousands of autistic youth to surfing, adaptive aquatics, and drowning-prevention skills. Surf Camp is more than a week at the beach — it’s confidence-building, independence-boosting, and life-changing for participants and their families. Parents often share that watching their child ride a wave for the first time is a moment they will never forget.

Beyond Surf Camp, Autism Society San Diego provides monthly support groups, family meet-ups, adult social gatherings, aquatics programs, and community education designed to meet families where they are. These services ensure that individuals of all ages have access to safe spaces, peer connection, and resources that strengthen the autism community year-round.

As they celebrate their Diamond Anniversary, Autism Society San Diego invites the San Diego

community to join them for their 60th Anniversary Diamond Gala on October 3, 2026 . This milestone event will honor six decades of service, recognize the families and community partners who have shaped their journey, and raise critical support to expand programs for the next generation.

Their work is possible because of the unwavering support of the San Diego region — its families, businesses, volunteers, and partners who believe in creating a more inclusive future.

Learn more at: www.autismsocietysandiego.org

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Aug 30, 2026

BUSINESS The Business Case for Immigration Reform

Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President Jessica Anderson participated in a panel discussion titled

“The Business of Immigration: Ethics, Economics, and the Future of our Region,” hosted by the San Diego World Affairs Council and OneSD. As part of the Engage San Diego: Tough Topics, Real Discussion series, the panel explored how immigration influences San Diego’s economy, policies, and long-term success of the CaliBaja region.

Jessica shared highlights on the Chamber’s advocacy efforts to advance comprehensive immigration reform and oppose aggressive enforcement practices that create fear and disrupt our communities. Efforts include support for H.R. 7961 by Representative Lawler, which exempts physicians and essential health workers from \$100K H1-B visas, and support for H.R. 5973 by Representative Peters, which aims to reduce reliance on unpredictable enforcement approaches which

undermine stability for employers and workers.

Additional advocacy efforts include coalition letters on requirements for temporary protected status, asylum seekers, and DACA recipients, as well as advancing visas for international students. For decades, the Chamber has advocated for comprehensive immigration reform . Providing a standardized, legal, and safe pathway to citizenship is crucial to workforce availability and providing businesses with the talent they need to grow and compete. Recognizing that 1 out of 3 members of our workforce in San Diego and across California is an immigrant, and the immigrant community contributes to nearly one-third of our region’s GDP, the Chamber will remain a steady voice for immigration reforms that strengthen our binational region.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Aug 21, 2026

AROUND CALIFORNIA

Statewide news

CALIFORNIA California Assemblyman Steers \$6 Million in Taxpayer Funding to His Own Nonprofit

The California Globe reported that Assemblyman Corey Jackson named his nonprofit the Nonprofit of the Year for his district before directing \$6 million from the state budget to it, raising self-dealing concerns that prompted a defense from Hardy Brown of California Black Media.

California taxpayers are on the hook for \$6 million sent to a nonprofit founded and directed by a sitting state assemblyman, according to the California Globe.

Assemblyman Dr. Corey Jackson, a Democrat from Moreno Valley, founded and directs the Center Against

Racism and Trauma, which has been tax-exempt only since February 2022. This year he named it his district’s Nonprofit of the Year before directing the public dollars its way.

The transfer is shown in the floor report of the 2026-27 state budget, as reported by the California Globe, and has prompted questions about potential conflicts of interest in the use of public resources.

Hardy Brown of California Black Media defended the assemblyman instead of addressing the transfer and accused the Globe of a “hit piece,” implying the coverage was motivated by bias against Jackson because he is Black.

“In the Black community we do not have the luxury of ignoring any of our leaders whether we agree with them

or not,” Brown said.

Brown called Jackson an outspoken advocate for equity, fairness, public health and social services in the Inland Valley and said he has come to admire the lawmaker’s grit and legislative work, even if he does not always agree with Jackson’s positions.

In an opinion piece, Brown described the Globe’s article as scathing, one-sided and under-reported, claiming the reporter omitted key details, inserted unrelated information, mixed up facts and exaggerated to suggest Jackson acted inappropriately or illegally in directing the funds.

Brown began his piece by noting that “Assemblymember Corey A. Jackson is my friend.” He warned against accusing the

assemblyman of inappropriate self-serving actions or calling for the Trump Administration’s Department of Justice to investigate a Black elected official.

The Globe states that its article is entirely about the self-dealing and abuse of office involved. It has reported on questionable conduct by lawmakers from both parties, such as Republican legislators who voted for tax increases or used a ballot initiative committee to take lobbyist friends to the Kentucky Derby.

Brown acknowledged that the articles might raise concerns about the nonprofit’s revenue going from \$250,000 to \$6 million, especially since it appears to depend on government funds instead of private contributions.

The source article notes that the money becomes untraceable once it reaches the nonprofit, which has no employees and a questionable mission, leaving open questions about where the funds are going.

The Globe included the budget page documenting the \$6 million allocation. Jackson named his own organization the district’s Nonprofit of the Year about three weeks before the funding amount appeared in the budget and then voted for the spending measure.

Brown also criticized the inclusion of information about speakers at Jackson’s events, such as Angela Davis, Dolores Huerta and Ibrahim Kendi, which the Globe reported from the

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AROUND CALIFORNIA (CONTINUED)

Statewide news

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California Assemblyman Steers \$6 Million in Taxpayer Funding to His Own Nonprofit

assemblyman’s website; the

outlet argued the details relate to transparency issues for a publicly funded group.

The Globe has examined similar issues involving lawmakers of either party when their actions appear to benefit organizations they

oversee, and it maintains that no elected official should be shielded from accountability based on ethnicity.

Using public money for groups connected to legislators creates clear conflict-of-interest concerns that go

beyond party lines, the Globe argues. Citizens have a right to transparency on how their tax dollars are used.

The source article says Assemblyman Jackson was playing fast and loose with taxpayer money and should

be investigated, as should any lawmaker in the same situation. It rejects the idea that this is a partisan attack or that Jackson is a victim.

San Diego Newsline · Based on reporting by California Globe · Sep 7, 2026

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



Groundbreaking: Another money pit for 'affordable' housing

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

Opinion — the views of the writers named, not news reporting

COMMENTARY

California Policy Center Warns New Pension Bill for First Responders Repeats Costly Mistakes of the Past

Edward Ring argues that Assembly Bill 1383, which lets first responders retire earlier and with more money, will deepen unfunded liabilities and strain budgets already burdened by generous public pensions.

California’s public sector unions have once again placed their own financial interests ahead of the broader public good, according to Edward Ring.

Ring writes that unions representing police and firefighters pushed through Assembly Bill 1383, legislation that will let first responders retire earlier and with

more money. The bill passed the state Senate unanimously 33-0 and the Assembly by a 70-2 margin.

This move comes even though the state’s pension systems are barely achieving solvency thanks to the 2012 Public Employee Pension Reform Act pushed through by then-Gov. Jerry Brown and a prolonged bull market in stocks.

Ring warns that assuming the stock market’s nearly continuous rise since 2009 — aside from a brief COVID-era dip — will never end amounts to denying economic reality. He notes that a similar scenario unfolded in 1999 when, at the peak of the internet bubble, unions pushed through Senate Bill 400 granting comparable enhancements.

Following that legislation, other public employee

unions pushed through similar legislation or negotiated similar benefit enhancements across state, city and county agencies. Within years, California taxpayers were on the hook for hundreds of billions of dollars in unfunded pension liabilities with no end in sight.

To explain the risks, Ring offers a metaphor likening a pension fund to a garden shrub. The shrub’s mass represents assets, its growth represents investment returns, and pruning represents payments to retirees. Increasing payouts risks shrinking the shrub faster than it can regrow, he writes.

When markets correct or the economy slows, the resulting shortfalls — known as unfunded payments — fall entirely on taxpayers, since pension plans do not automatically raise employee

contributions. These unfunded costs already run double to quadruple the normal contribution levels in many jurisdictions.

Despite the 2012 reforms, which modestly trimmed benefits while still leaving them more generous than pre-1999 levels, pension obligations continue to crowd out funding for other public services and drive demands for higher taxes, Ring writes.

Under Gov. Gavin Newsom, state spending has more than doubled even as the population has slightly declined, making the pension crisis — involving hundreds of billions of dollars — easy to overlook.

Ring highlights the stark differences between public pensions and Social Security. The average annual pension for retired public safety workers is more than \$80,000,

while California Highway Patrol retirees average more than \$114,000. Teachers average \$68,880. Many public employees can begin collecting full benefits after only five years of service, as early as age 52.

By contrast, someone paying the maximum into Social Security from age 22 until 70 would receive at most \$62,172 per year, with the average benefit just \$25,020. Public employees contribute about one quarter (or less) of the true cost of their benefits, with taxpayers covering the rest, while Social Security recipients pay half and face stricter rules based on 35 years of earnings.

The commentary notes a 2015 reform meeting in Sacramento disrupted by union activists, one of whom was revealed to be a retiree

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COMMENTARY (CONTINUED)

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California Policy Center Warns New Pension Bill for First Responders Repeats Costly Mistakes of the Past

receiving \$183,690 annually — which grew to \$225,039 by 2024 with cost-of-living adjustments.

While acknowledging the risks faced by first responders, Ring argues that public service should involve reciprocity. Taxpayers cannot reasonably be expected to fund pensions several times greater than what most private-sector workers can ever hope to achieve.

Beyond fiscal strain, these disparities undermine the social contract underlying government. Public employees, insulated from the solvency threats facing private citizens, have incentives to expand government and union membership regardless of broader harm.

Ring criticizes public servants for losing sight of fundamental values and using political power to extract more for themselves rather than addressing issues like bringing back the timber industry or enforcing Proposition 36 to combat crime.

He concludes that California is a broken state in which public servants have become the public masters with the power to help fix it, yet choose not to.

The bottom line, according to Ring: Public sector pensions are breaking more than

government budgets — they are challenging the social contract that legitimizes government and undermining what it means to be an American citizen.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Sep 9, 2026

COMMENTARY
Ballot Rules Tilt the Scales Toward Tax and Bond Proponents, Op-Ed Argues

Current county election procedures make it far easier for government-backed tax measures to present polished arguments in voter guides while leaving opponents at a distinct disadvantage, according to a visiting fellow at the California Policy Center.

Voter information pamphlets distributed across California counties this year will once more highlight an uneven contest over local tax and bond proposals.

Arguments backing these measures tend to feature professional writing and multiple prominent local signatories, while rebuttals frequently appear amateurish, carry fewer names or fail to appear at all.

In San Bernardino County, for instance, no opposing statement will accompany Measure Y, which seeks authority to borrow \$898 million for the community college district, nor will voters find a case against Measure Z, a \$345 million bond request for the city school district.

Residents in both districts could pay a combined

average of \$70 per \$100,000 of assessed home value each year if both measures pass, yet the official mailed guides will offer them no explanation of possible drawbacks.

This pattern does not stem merely from widespread public support for higher taxes. Instead, it flows directly from election rules that lower barriers for public agencies and their supporters while raising obstacles for ordinary citizens and taxpayer organizations.

The supporting statement for Measure Y highlights outdated classrooms, asbestos, mold, wildfire dangers and the need to prepare nurses and firefighters, signed by a nurse, fire chief, small business owner, oversight panel member and trades program graduate, with a link to further details.

Such polished presentations rarely arise without help. Agencies proposing new debt or taxes typically draw on administrators, public relations teams, lawyers, financial experts and outside consultants to shape their campaigns and recruit credible backers.

Those opposing the measures, by contrast, generally rely on volunteers balancing work and family duties who must first learn that a proposal exists, grasp its effects, gather signers, compose a statement and master complex submission rules.

Outdated paper-based requirements compound the difficulty. Many local election offices still insist on printed

documents bearing original handwritten signatures, compelling opponents to travel extensively to collect names and deliver packets before tight deadlines.

A group of Contra Costa County volunteers logged hundreds of miles this summer while challenging local measures, with the need to file rebuttals potentially doubling the travel burden.

Deadlines often prove equally punishing. For measures filed as late as August 7 in San Bernardino County, initial arguments were due August 17 and rebuttals August 21, leaving scant time for discovery, research, recruitment and drafting.

Even the required “impartial analysis” reached the public only five hours after the primary argument deadline, forcing opponents to respond before seeing the official description while proponents, familiar with their own proposals, faced no similar handicap.

Three practical fixes are proposed. Counties should accept secure electronic signatures, consistent with existing state law under Government Code Section 16.5 and practices already allowed by the Fair Political Practices Commission for other political filings.

Second, the state should establish a uniform online portal where citizens could upload arguments, gather digital signatures, receive filing confirmations and learn whether their statement was selected for the voter guide.

The system could automatically enforce word limits, post materials after deadlines and route opposing statements to rebuttal writers.

Third, deadlines should be standardized statewide so that impartial analyses appear before arguments are due, sufficient time follows ballot qualification, and rebuttal authors receive reasonable periods to reply.

Taxpayer advocates operating in multiple jurisdictions would no longer need to master varying local calendars and procedures under such reforms.

While these changes would not ensure opposing arguments always appear or that they match the quality of proponent statements, they would at least partially even the odds for citizens wishing to present alternative perspectives before voters approve new taxes or borrowing.

Such steps would move California closer to the ideal of direct democracy envisioned by Hiram Johnson over a century ago.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Sep 4, 2026

ABOUT THIS PAPER
San Diego Newsline covers downtown San Diego first — City Hall, the Gaslamp Quarter, East Village, Little Italy, Barrio Logan and the waterfront — and the county around it. Every item names its source; read the originals and our standards at sandiegonewsline.com.

MORE NEWS

COUNTY

County Childhood Obesity Initiative Marks 20 Years of Healthier Communities

The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (COI) marked its 20th anniversary today, celebrating two decades of community-led work to help children and families live healthier lives.

Today, just over one in three children in San Diego is overweight or obese — a reminder of why the initiative’s work remains critical.

Founded in 2006 as a public-private partnership, COI has grown into a network of over 400 local partners, including the University of California San Diego and the YMCA of San Diego County. Together, they collaborate across schools, healthcare, early childhood programs,

government, and community groups to reduce childhood obesity and advance health equity.

Over the past year, COI participants completed 59 community engagement activities and 11 community outreach events. They provided training on safe sleep, breastfeeding-friendly environments, and park-and-walk audits. The initiative also leveraged more than \$7.8 million in funding to support community-designed projects, leadership development and nutritional efforts such as fruit and vegetable incentive programs.

Strong relationships and community leadership have driven COI’s success. These partnerships have reinforced local obesity prevention efforts and expanded access to nutritious food, safe places to play and culturally responsive community programs.

Looking ahead, COI will continue to focus on growing partnerships, expanding prevention work, and making community voices the center of decisions that will help children and families thrive.

For more information about the Childhood Obesity Initiative, visit sdcoi.org .

County of San Diego news release · Sep 8, 2026

COUNTY
Crypto Illness Linked to Gaylord Resort; All Pools Reopened After Thorough Disinfection

The County has concluded an investigation into cryptosporidiosis exposure at swimming pools, spas, and the water park at the Gaylord Pacific Resort in Chula Vista. The gastrointestinal illness, known as “Crypto,” is caused by a microscopic, chlorine-tolerant parasite that can trigger gastrointestinal

symptoms, including watery diarrhea.

Resort guests reported illnesses after visiting the resort’s pools between July 24 and Aug. 15. Three cases were confirmed through laboratory testing, and a fourth was reported by a family member. Symptoms usually start two to 10 days after exposure and last one to two weeks.

The resort is private and not publicly accessible, so hotel staff directly notified all guests and day pass visitors who used the pools during the exposure window.

On Aug. 25, after being alerted by County staff, Gaylord Pacific voluntarily closed all pools and began a CDC-recommended hyperchlorination treatment to eliminate the parasite. The treatment included boosting chlorine levels, inspecting and cleaning pool filters, and maintaining elevated

chemical levels until the water met safety standards.

County inspectors visited the resort on Aug. 26, 27 and 28 and verified that proper procedures were completed. All pools, spas and water park features were cleared to reopen on Aug. 28.

If you have any questions about the status of the pool, please call the County Pool Program line at (858) 505-6900 or e-mail fhdutyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov or call the Gaylord Pacific Resort.

Learn more about cryptosporidiosis on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Anyone experiencing severe or worsening symptoms should contact their medical provider or call 211 to receive help in finding care.

County of San Diego news release · Sep 4, 2026